

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-5, 9, 11, and 12 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Claims 6-8, 10, 13-17 are pending. Claims 14-16 are withdrawn. Claims 6-8, 10, and 13 are amended, and claim 17 is added. Claims 14-17 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner states that claim 12 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Applicants thanks the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. In response, independent claim 17 is added combining the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 12, claim 5, and claim 2. Therefore, independent claim 17 is now in condition for allowance.

Foreign Priority Claim

The Examiner has acknowledged the Applicants' claim for foreign priority.

Information Disclosure Citation

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the reference supplied with the Information Disclosure Statement filed February 5, 2004, and for providing Applicants with an initialed copy of the PTO-1449 form filed therewith.

Drawings

The Examiner has not indicated whether or not the drawings have been accepted. Clarification is respectfully requested in the next official communication.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has withdrawn claims 14-16. If the Examiner maintains his Restriction Requirement, the Applicants reserve the right to file one or more Divisional Applications directed to withdrawn claims 14-16 at a later date if they so desire.

Revised Abstract of the Disclosure

The Abstract has been revised, thus overcoming the Examiner's objection.

Claim Objection

Claim 6 has been amended to address the issue pointed out by the Examiner. Objected-to claims 9, 11, and 12 have been cancelled.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and 103(a)

Claims 1-3, 11, and 13 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Jukiba et al. (U.S. 6,629,939);

claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Canto (U.S. 6,443,917); and

claims 4-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jikiba et al. in view of Marcantoni (U.S. 6,083,181).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As noted above, claims 1-5, 9, 11, and 12 have been cancelled. In addition, new independent claim 17 is added combining the allowable subject matter of objected-to claim 12, claim 5 and claim 2.

Therefore, independent claim 17 is now in condition for allowance.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 17 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Jikiba et al., Canto, and Marcantoni.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

Dependent claims 6, 8, 10, and 13 are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claim 17, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein.

Accordingly, since the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are now moot, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject claims, but merely to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.


All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: September 8, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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Attachment: Revised Abstract